

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Canceled)
11. (Canceled)
12. (Canceled)
13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

21. (New) A metal sterilization container for sterilizing items in a gas plasma sterilization medium, the container comprising:

an aluminum lid having a first set of vent holes;

an aluminum bottom having a second set of vent holes, the aluminum bottom attachable to the aluminum lid;

a first and second filter medium, permeable to the flow of gas plasma, respectively associated with the first and second set of vent holes; and

an anodic coating substantially applied to the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom, the anodic coating having a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

22. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the aluminum comprises 6061 T6.

23. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).

24. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches).

25. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).

26. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

27. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches) and 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

28. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the first set of vent holes and the second set of vent holes are offset from each other.

29. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a gasket attachable between the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom.

30. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a filter retainer plate attachable to the aluminum lid, the filter retainer plate having a set of vent holes substantially offset relative to the first set of vent holes.

31. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the first filter medium is substantially affixed to the aluminum lid with a gap between the first filter medium and the aluminum lid.

32. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the second filter medium is substantially affixed to the aluminum bottom with a gap between the second filter medium and the aluminum bottom.

33. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a gasket attachable between the aluminum lid and the first filter medium.
34. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 33, wherein the gasket comprises silicone.
35. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 33, wherein the gasket comprises neoprene.
36. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a gasket attachable between the aluminum bottom and the second filter medium.
37. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 36, wherein the gasket comprises silicone.
38. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 36, wherein the gasket comprises neoprene.
39. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the filter medium comprises polypropylene.
40. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a third set of vent holes substantially located in the aluminum bottom.
41. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom are substantially electrically insulated from each other.
42. (New) A system for sterilizing items in a container with a gas plasma, the system comprising:
means for introducing the gas plasma;
an aluminum lid having a first set of vent holes;

an aluminum bottom having a second set of vent holes, the aluminum bottom attachable to the aluminum lid;

a first and second filter medium, permeable to the flow of gas plasma, respectively associated with the first and second set of vent holes; and

an anodic coating substantially applied to the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom, the anodic coating having a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

43. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).

44. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches).

45. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).

46. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

47. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches) and 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

48. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the first set of vent holes and the second set of vent holes are offset from each other.

49. (New) The system of claim 42, further comprising a gasket attachable between the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom.

50. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the first filter medium is substantially affixed to the aluminum lid with a gap between the first filter medium and the aluminum lid.

51. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the second filter medium is substantially affixed to the aluminum bottom with a gap between the second filter medium and the aluminum bottom.
52. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the filter medium comprises polypropylene.
53. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom are substantially electrically insulated from each other.
54. (New) The system of claim 42, further comprising a filter retainer plate attachable to the aluminum lid, the filter retainer plate having a set of vent holes substantially offset relative to the first set of vent holes.
55. (New) A method for sterilizing instruments in a metal container having a lid and a bottom, the lid having a first set of vent holes and a first filter medium, the bottom having a second set of vent holes and a second filter medium, the method comprising the steps of:
- placing at least one instrument in the metal container;
 - passing a gas plasma sterilization medium through the first set of vent holes and the first filter medium;
 - causing the gas plasma sterilization medium to turbulently flow within the metal container;
 - substantially restricting an electrical current between the lid and the bottom, wherein the lid and the bottom comprise an anodization layer with a thickness not greater than 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches); and
 - passing the gas plasma sterilization medium through the second set of vent holes and the second filter medium.
56. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).
57. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches).

58. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).

59. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

60. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches) and 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

61. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein the step of causing the gas plasma sterilization medium to turbulently flow is substantially caused by an offset between the first set of vent holes and the second set of vent holes.

62. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein the step of causing the gas plasma sterilization medium to turbulently flow is substantially caused by a gap between the first filter medium and the aluminum lid.

63. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein the step of causing the gas plasma sterilization medium to turbulently flow is substantially caused by a gap between the aluminum bottom and the second filter medium.

64. (New) A method of manufacturing an aluminum sterilization container having a lid and a bottom, the method comprising the steps of:

- forming a first set of vent holes in the lid;
- forming a second set of vent holes in the bottom; and
- applying a substantially uniform anodic coating to the lid and the bottom, the anodic coating having a thickness no greater than 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

65. (New) The method of claim 64, wherein the step of forming a second set of vent holes comprises the step of forming the second set of vent holes at an offset relative to the position of the first set of vent holes.

66. (New) The method of claim 64, further comprising the step of attaching a gasket to the lid substantially at a location where the lid contacts the bottom.

67. (New) The method of claim 64, wherein the step of applying the anodic coating to the lid and the bottom comprises the step of placing the lid and the bottom in a bath including sulfuric acid.

68. (New) The method of claim 64, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).

69. (New) The method of claim 64, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches).

70. (New) The method of claim 64, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).

71. (New) The method of claim 64, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

72. (New) The method of claim 64, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches) and 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).